



In-Class Curriculum for Local Schools

Let Us Come To You!

Great Sand Dunes offers free in-class curriculum-based programs for San Luis Valley schools in fall and winter. Schedule one of the following programs or create your own and let the resources of your neighborhood National Park enrich your classroom.

Contact: Melanie_Rawlins@nps.gov, 719-378-6344 for more information.

Science-of-the-Month Club

All programs run
45 minutes per classroom.

This series of hands-on activities – one visit per month through the winter season – hit multiple science standards while engaging your students and preparing them for that end-of-the year spring field trip.

- Five Senses (K-6th)
- Habitat (K-6th)
- Our Changing Earth (K-6th)
- Living vs non-living (K-2nd)
- Life Cycles (3rd-6th)



You may opt for some or all of the offered programs but we encourage you to collaborate with coworkers and schedule multiple classes to participate.

Literacy

All programs run
45 minutes per classroom.



Reading With a Ranger (K-2nd grade)
Students will read stories about National Park Rangers and the jobs they do.
(CDE Standards: Reading 4.5, 4.6)

Sand Dunes Poetry (3rd-5th grade)
Students will construct simple poems and stories using the Great Sand Dunes as inspiration.
(CDE Standards: Reading 2.1, 2.3)

Land In Literature (6th-8th grade)
Students will read, analyze, and discuss passages in classic literature that examine the human relationship to land.
(CDE Standards: Reading 4.4, 4.5, 6.1, 6.2)

Social Sciences

All programs run
45 minutes per classroom.

History is a Mystery (K-2nd grade)
Students will learn how historians and archeologists solve mysteries by using the clues left behind by people long ago. The class will “excavate” its own trash can and put together a Great Sand Dunes archeology puzzle.
(CDE Standards: History 2.1, 2.2)

Layers in Time (3rd-5th grade)
Students will learn the difference between *observation* and *inference* and how scientists use both to learn about the past. Students will perform a mini-excavation to reveal layers of artifacts buried in sand.
(CDE Standards: History 1.1, 2.1, 2.2)

Living in the Past (6th-8th grade)
Students will tour the history of human settlement at Great Sand Dunes and the surrounding San Luis Valley – from pre-historic mammoth-hunters to Spanish exploration to early ranching to park establishment.
(CDE Standards: History 1.2, 2.3, 3.1, 4.2)





Field Trips to Great Sand Dunes

The Sand Awaits

Great Sand Dunes offers free hands-on educational programming for school groups visiting Great Sand Dunes. The following is a selection of popular programs we have done in the past. However, park staff are available year round for custom-built programs ranging in topic, duration, and setting.

Contact: Melanie_Rawlins@nps.gov, 719-378-6344 for more information.

Short Field Trips

Generalist programs (1 hour)

Your National Park and Playground (K-2nd): National parks like this one are created to protect special places for everyone, forever.

What’s Great About Great Sand Dunes (3-5th): More than just tall dunes, this park includes all sorts of surprising superlatives.

A Park for People (6-8th): Science, democracy, exploration, and recreation. Human history is integral to the Great Sand Dunes story.

Earth Science programs (1 hour)

A World of Wind (K-2nd): The air meets the earth in this program about wind, weather, and dunes.

Mountains to Sand (3-5th): Great volcanoes, splitting crust, and the ever-present force of erosion can turn mountains to sand... and back again.

Rock ‘n Roll! (6-8th): The building blocks of our planet lead a wild and sometimes tragic existence.

Life Science programs (1 hour)

Creepy Crawly Habitat (K-2nd): Examine the four aspects of habitat (food, water, shelter, and space) through the eyes of Great Sand Dunes endemic insects.

Sand Land (3-5th): The food chain, the web of life, the ecosystem, the trophic pyramid. No matter what the name, we’re a part of it here in the sand land.

Ancient Animals (6-8th): Go back in time to explore a community of life that once thrived but is now forgotten.



Half-Day Guided Hike

Escape Dunes

Topics may vary, but the landscape never disappoints on this exciting 2-3 hour guided hike. Even students who have visited the dunes many times in the past have probably never seen the Escape Dunes or the unique resources along the way. Adventure and surprise await on this “secret” trail. Appropriate for K-12.

Come prepared for all types of weather and closed-toe shoes to protect against cactus.



Junior Ranger Academy



Introduce your students to the range of jobs that park rangers do. Plan almost a full day (4-5 hours) to run the course of a Junior Ranger Academy. Learn how to track elk, perform winter rescues, search buildings, dig fire line, and build a snow cave.

This program is available in *winter only* and intended for Grade 5-8.

Transportation Funds

Wheels to the Field
Grant information can be found at:
www.slv-ecec.org